

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EA-11 ISO-00 AEC-11 AID-20 CEA-02

CIAE-00 CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 FEA-02 FPC-01 H-03

INR-10 INT-08 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 OMB-01 PM-07 RSC-01

SAM-01 SCI-06 SP-03 SS-20 STR-08 TRSE-00 PA-04

USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01 /170 W
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R 261459Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3742

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMCONSUL DOUALA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LAGOS 3571

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, NI, CM

SUBJ: PETROLEUM: BLOWOUT INTERRUPTS DRILLING ON
CAMEROUN BORDER

REF: AFRICA EAL (JAN-SEPT 1974) P 38, NO 11

1. SUMMARY: BLOWOUT WHICH OCCURRED APRIL 21 IN OFFSHORE BLOCK IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT CAMEROUN REPRESENTS SEVERE SET-BACK TO DRILLING PROGRAMS OF ASHLAND OIL COMPANY AND JAPAN PETROLEUM COMPANY. END SUMMARY.

2. WELL LOCATED IN OFFSHORE BLOCK OPL-98 AT APPROXIMATELY 8 DEGREES, 20 MINUTES, 10 SECONDS EAST LONG., 4 DEGREES, 10 MINUTES, 45 SECONDS NORTH LAT. DRILLING BEGAN ON OR ABOUT APRIL 7 USING THE "METEROTE," A BARGE-ATTENDED JACK-UP RIG OWNED BY THE OFFSHORE COMPANY OF HOUSTON, TEXAS, AND OPERATED BY INTERNATIONAL DRILLING COMPANY, OFFSHORE'S NIGERIAN SUBSIDIARY. BLOWOUT ON APRIL 21
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COLLAPSED ALL THREE LEGS AND SET RIG ADRIFT. FORTUNATELY

ESCAPING GAS DID NOT IGNITE, AND UNDERWATER FLOW APPEARS TO HAVE ENDED

AFTER SEVERAL DAYS. MIRACULOUSLY THERE WERE NO INJURIES TO PERSONNEL. ESTIMATED 12-18 MONTHS REQUIRED TO RETURN "METEORITE" TO SERVICE.

3. THE "METEORITE" WAS UNDER LONG-TERM CONTRACT TO JAPAN PETROLEUM COMPANY (NIGERIA) LTD (JPN), AN AFFILIATE OF JPDC, AND ASSIGNED TEMPORARILY TO ASHLAND OIL (NIGERIA) LTD., WHICH IS EXPLORING OPL-98 UNDER PRODUCTION SHARING CONTRACT WITH THE 100 PERCENT FMG-OWNED NIGERIAN NATIONAL OIL CORPORATION (NNOC). THE "METEORITE'S" REMOVAL FROM SERVICE REPRESENTS SEVERE STE-BACK TO EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS OF ALL THREE COMPANIES.

4. THIS WAS THE FIRST DRILLING ACTIVITY IN OPL-98 WHICH ABUTS THE REPORTEDLY DISPUTED MARINE BOUNDARY WITH CAMEROUN. ACCORDING ASHLAND AND GEOPHYSICAL SERVICE INC. (THE AMERICAN SEISMIC EXPLORATION AND SURVEYING COMPANY WHICH WORKS FOR ASHLAND), THE TWO GOVERNMENTS MAY NOT YET KNOW HOW THEY WOULD SHARE OIL OR GAS FIELDS WHICH MAY BE FOUND TO LIE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BOUNDARY, BUT THE BOUNDARY ITSELF, THEY SAY, IS CLEARLY SHOWN ON THEIR MAPS AND RECOGNIZED BY BOTH SIDES. DRILLING IN OPL-98 IS NOW NOT EXPECTED TO RESUME UNTIL ANOTHER RIG CAN BE FOUND, AND, UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, AVAILABLE RIGS ARE VERY DIFFICULT TO FIND.
REINHARDT

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